



Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police

Wednesday, July 20, 2011

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Good morning!

It's an honor to be with you this morning – to be in beautiful Flagstaff, and, at the same time, to be able to escape the Phoenix heat.

Let me begin by telling you a story I heard about a woman who was driving along, minding her own business – but, she was being tailgated by a man who clearly was angry and agitated.

Suddenly, the light turned yellow -- just in front of her, and, she did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk.

The man who was tailgating her lost his temper. He blew his horn, and started screaming and swearing at the woman, gesturing wildly.

Just then, he heard a tap on his window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer.

The officer ordered him to exit his car with his hands up. He was taken to the police station where he was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a cell.

A few hours later, he was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with an apology.

The officer said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, and screaming and swearing at the driver ahead of you.

"I noticed your 'PEACE IS THE ANSWER' license plate holder – and all those bumper stickers you had on our car that said 'ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE – and 'ONE PEOPLE—ONE PLANET' – and 'COEXIST.'"

“Well, naturally, when I saw the way you were behaving ... I ASSUMED you had STOLEN the car!”

Clearly, that police officer’s instincts were GOOD ones.

But, as you know, good police work requires more than good instincts.

YOUR success in reducing crime -- comes with an emphasis on intelligence-led policing, information-sharing and partnerships between law enforcement agencies.

A great example of federal and state efforts to enhance information sharing is the Arizona Fusion Center.

Also known as the Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center – this is addressing serious challenges affecting homeland security with the timely exchange of intelligence and critical information between state, local and federal agencies.

Accurate and timely intelligence are the keys to the most fundamental responsibility of government -- protecting its citizens and critical infrastructures.

The Fusion Center demonstrates the effectiveness of utilizing an “Intelligence-Led” policing model when combating public safety issues.

Still, there is much to be done.

When there are NO communications, or when there are TOO MANY silos and NOT ENOUGH sharing of critical information – well, we saw that clearly in the federal government’s FAST AND FURIOUS operation.

According to a congressional report, federal agents were instructed to stand aside and DO NOTHING as up to 2,000 weapons were illegally purchased in Arizona and resold.

In many cases, the end result appears to have been the arming of violent drug cartels south of the border.

Tragically, two AK-47s traced back to Operation Fast and Furious later turned up at the crime scene near Rio Rico, Arizona, where Arizona Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry was murdered by bandits.

Operation Fast and Furious endangered the lives of innocent people on both sides of the border.

And, we're still waiting for answers from the Department of Justice and ATF as to how this could have been sanctioned, let alone encouraged. Clearly, when agencies fail to collaborate and fail to share information, grave consequences follow.

So, let me leave you with four areas I believe need to be strengthened:

-- First, one of the greatest threats to this state and the stability of our communities comes from cross border violence, drug trafficking and human smuggling.

And, it's OK to admit that fact.

Arizona has been more than patient while waiting for Washington to take concrete steps to stem the flow of illegal immigration.

As law enforcement officers, you have witnessed first-hand the consequences of federal inaction and misguided policy on this issue.

I, and the Legislature, had no choice but to stand up for the rule of law and the citizens of this great country.

With SB 1070, Arizona was willing to do the job that the federal government refuses to do.

I recognize that not everyone in this room agreed with SB 1070. But, I think that we can all agree we cannot stand idly by as drop houses, kidnappings and violence compromise our quality of life.

Well, it's been more than a year after the signing of SB 1070, and I'm more determined than ever to fight for this legislation – all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary.

But, it is equally clear that the mission ahead of us is not merely to defend SB 1070.

As Governor, I will continue to defend and protect the safety, health and welfare of ALL Arizona citizens.

-- Second, I believe we all have a duty to speak with a unified voice on irresponsible ballot measures that jeopardize public safety.

Proposition 203, the medical marijuana proposition, is a good example of where a unified voice might have prevented passage of this dreadful situation.

So, we are now faced with continued confusion and doublespeak from the Department of Justice regarding the legality of locally-authorized medical marijuana programs in Arizona and other states.

-- Third, policy makers and the law enforcement community must work together with stakeholders to ensure that new laws are CLEARLY and CAREFULLY written.

This is especially important when dealing with legislation that strengthens our Second Amendment rights.

For example, two years ago my office worked closely with law enforcement agencies and associations to ensure that the Constitutional Carry bill struck a common sense balance between individual liberty and public safety.

This should be a model of collaboration for all future firearm legislation.

-- Finally, we must take care of law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line by protecting our communities.

Increasingly, law enforcement officers are being targeted by criminals in both the real world and the cyber world.

Gangs of thugs and hackers stand in opposition to the rule of law and those who enforce it. WE WILL NOT BE INTIMIDATED, and we will NEVER cease in our efforts to apprehend these criminals.

You are members and leaders of the thin blue line – a line that separates families and neighborhoods living in peace and safety – defending against crime and fear and chaos.

You do this every day.

You do this as a calling, as a duty to serve others.

The thanks you receive might not come often enough, and the appreciation from communities might sometimes seem muted.

But, your service – and the service of those you lead – is among the most critical in a free and safe society.

I salute you – and thank you – for your efforts throughout the state -- keeping Arizonans, families and businesses safe.

Thank you for leading by example and setting the standard for integrity within your organizations.

May God bless you and the officers you lead, may He bless Arizona and may He always preserve and protect the United States of America. Thank you.